

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BANGKO 17574 01 OF 03 110321Z

63/16

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 100721Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO ?AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3802

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8170

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

S E C R E T T E E C T I O N 1 O F 3 B A N G K O K 1 7 5 7 4

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: THE NEW THAILAND

TOKYO OR PEKING FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER FROM AMBASSADOR UNGER

SUMMARY: THIS WEEK THE GOVERNMENT OF PRIME MINISTER

SANYA WILL BE ONE MONTH OLD. IT HAS TAKEN UP ITS TASKS

WITH MODEST VIGOR AND EVIDENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEW

PUBLIC TEMPER IN THAILAND. IT WILL PROBABLY SUCCEED

IN ADMINISTERING THE COUNTRY UNTIL THE ANTICIPATED ELECTED

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SECRET

PAGE 02 BANGKO 17574 01 OF 03 110321Z

GOVERNMENT IS READY TO TAKE OVER AROUND NINE MONTHS TO A

YEAR FROM NOW. MEANWHILE LITTLE INNOVATION OR ACCELERATED PROGRESS ON MOST OF THAILAND'S URGENT PROBLEMS IS TO BE EXPECTED. IN THAT SAME PERIOD I BELIEVE THAT MATTERS IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS AN INTIMATE INTEREST WILL BE TREATED BY THE RTG ABOUT AS FAVORABLY AS IN THE PAST. THE OUTLOOK, HOWEVER, FOR THAILAND'S STABILITY FARTHER DOWN THE ROAD ONCE IT IS IN THE CHARGE OF AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT UNDER A NEW CONSTITUTION IS LESS PROMISING AND THE CONTINUATION OF THE SHORT-TERM GOOD PROSPECT FOR US INTERESTS IN THE LATER PERIOD IS LESS CLEAR. END SUMMARY.

1. IN ITS MONTH OF LIFE THE GOVERNMENT OF PRIME MINISTER SANYA DHARMASAKTI HAS ENJOYED WIDESPREAD PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE AND HAS TAKEN A FEW ACTIONS WHICH HAVE AROUSED ENTHUSIASM. THESE HAVE INCLUDED STRONG ACTIONS AGAINST THE THE HOLDINGS OF THANOM, PRAPASS AND NARONG IN THAILAND AND SOME STEPS AGAINST OFFICIALS, SUCH AS POLICE AND GOVERNORS, CHARGED WITH CORRUPTION AND MALFEASANCE. A MODEST BUT QUITE NEW EFFORT IN WHICH LEADING OFFICIALS SEEK TO EXPLAIN TO THE PUBLIC ON TV THE NATION'S PROBLEMS AND THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO HANDLE THEM HAS BEEN WELL RECEIVED. A GENERAL SHAKE UP OF THE POLICE, LONG OVERDUE, HAS BEEN WELCOMED BUT A SKEPTICAL PUBLIC IS WAITING TO SEE WHAT IT WILL MEAN IN FACT. STRONG PLEDGES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO PRESS NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT. WHILE VIRTUALLY NOTHING HAS YET BEEN DOEN ABOUT PRICES, THE KNOWLEDGE OF A GOOD RICE CROP SOON TO BE HARVESTED MAY HELP THE GOVERNMENT HANDLE THAT ISSUE. THE INSURGENCY PROBLEM CONTINUES UNCHANGED, IF NOT SOMEWHAT AGGRAVATED. THERE IS, HOEVER, A NEW ATMOSPHERE OF HOPE FOR BETTER TIMES AND REAL SATISFACTION AT THE DEPARTURE OF PRAPASS AND THANOM AND ESPECIALLY COLONEL NARONG WHO WERE INCREASINGLY DISLKED BY THE PUBLIC AND DESPISED, IN THE CASE OF THE COLONEL.

2. THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS TO RECKON WITH TWO FORCES WHICH COULD, BUT PROBABLY WILL NOT, TRY TO CHALLENGE ITS CONTROL IN THIS INTERIM PERIOD. THE ARMY UNDER GENERAL KRIT FOR THE PRESENT, AND PROBABLY THROUGH THE LIFE OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, SEEMS TO ACCEPT A TEMPORARY BACK SEAT AND A ROLE OF SUPPORTING RATHER THAN RUNNING THE GOVERNMENT. THIS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BANGKO 17574 01 OF 03 110321Z

COULD CHANGE IF THE STUDENTS SHOULD PUT FORWARD EXTREME DEAMDNS AND AGAIN TAKE TO THE STREETS TO WIN THEIR CASE. ALSO THE ARMY MIGHT REACT IF TOO MANY REFORM MEASURES THREATEN TO IMPACT TOO HEAVILY ON THE PRESERVES OF THE MILITARY, OR IF INCREASED OR NEW INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL SECURITY THREATS DEVELOP WHICH THE MILITARY BELIEVES A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT INCOMPETENT TO HANDLE.

3. ON THE STUDENT SIDE, AS LONG AS THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT CONTINUES ALONG PRESENT LINES, GIVING CONTINUING RECOGNITION TO THE EMERGENCE OF STUDENTS AS A POLITICAL FACTOR AND DISCHARGING ITS OBLIGATIONS OF PREPARING AN ACCEPTABLE CONSTITUTION, IT WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE SUPPORT OR AT LEAST ACQUIESCENCE. SERIOUS FISSURES HOWEVER ARE ALREADY DEVELOPING IN THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THIS MAY GIVE RISE TO A RADICAL WING LESS REASONABLE AND MODERATE IN ITS DEMANDS BUT NONETHELESS WELL SUPPORTED. EFFORTS BY SUCH EXTREMISTS TO UNSEAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY GET LITTLE PUBLIC SUPPORT. IT WAS THE INEFFECTIVENESS AND CORRUPTION OF THE THREE DEPOSED LEADERS THAT WON THE STUDENTS THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN OCTOBER BUT THEY COULD PROBABLY NOT COUNT ON THIS SUPPORT FOR A LESS WIDELY FELT CAUSE. IF STUDENT EXTREMISTS NEVERTHELESS TURNED TO VIOLENT ACTION, THIS MIGHT GIVE THE MILITARY AN EXCUSE FOR INTERVENING AND REASSUMING POWER.

4. THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER GREATLY ENHANCED AN ALREADY STRONG POSITION OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS GENERALLY THOUGHT OF AS "HIS" GOVERNMENT. WHILE HIS PRESTIGE IS THEREFORE SOMEWHAT ENGAGED IN THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF PRIME MINISTER SANYA AND HIS ASSOCIATES, THE KING CAN AND IS ALREADY WORKING TO REMOVE FROM THE DAILY SCENE TO BE IN A POSITION, IF NECESSARY, TO INTERVENE AGAIN AT A CRITICAL MOMENT. DESPITE RECENT HE IS NOT PERSONALLY COMMITTED FOR OR AGAINST STUDENTS OR MILITARY AND WOULD NOT SUPPORT THE FORMER AGAINST THE LATTER IN WHAT HE CONSIDERED EXTREME DEMANDS.

5. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THAILAND WAS AS SUPRISED AS EVERYONE ELSE OVER MID-OCTOBER EVENTS AND ONLY LATE IN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BANGKO 17574 01 OF 03 110321Z

THE GAME SOUGHT IN A RELATIVELY MINOR WAY TO REAP SOME ADVANTAGE FROM WHAT WAS OCCURRING. SUBSEQUENTLY THE INSURGENCY, IN ITS CONTACTS IN VILLAGES AND REMOTE AREAS, HAS BEEN CLAIMING CREDIT FOR THE EXPULSION OF THE THREE FORMER LEADERS, WITH LIMITED SUCCESS. POTENTIALLY MORE IMPORTANT, THE CPT IS NOW MUCH MORE ALIVE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF MANIPULATING THE URBAN GROUPS (STUDENTS, LABOR, INTELLECTUALS) TRADITIONALLY A TARGET FOR COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND SUPPORT AND THIS WILL PROBABLY BE A NEW FACTOR IN THE THAI POLITICAL EQUATION NOT PREVIOUSLY REQUIRING MUCH ATTENTION.

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MRN: 1973BANGKO017574 SEGMENT NUMBER: 000002 ERROR READING TEXT INDEX

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MRN: 1973BANGKO017574 SEGMENT NUMBER: 000003 ERROR READING TEXT INDEX

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Draft Date: 10 NOV 1973
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Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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